



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. ARMY ARMOR CENTER AND FORT KNOX
FORT KNOX, KENTUCKY 40121-5000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

ATZK-CFE-A (350)

30 October 2003


MEMORANDUM FOR

Commanders, All Units Reporting Directly to This Headquarters
Commanders, Fort Knox Partners in Excellence
Directors and Chiefs, Staff Offices/Departments, This Headquarters

SUBJECT: Thunderbolt Six Policy Memo No. 40-20 – Military Career Decision Time Requirements

1. Reference MILPER Message Number 02-156, 13 May 02, subject: Pre-separation Counseling Checklist (DD Form 2648).
2. This memorandum establishes the USAARMC and Fort Knox policy for use of transition time for military leaving the Army.
3. As military personnel approach the time of possible separation, informed, intelligent decisions must be made as to the best path for the individual to follow. It is important that career information be gleaned early from sources such as Retention, In-Service Recruiting (ISR), and the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP).
4. ACAP can greatly assist the individual in making sound career decisions such as remaining in the service, transferring to ARNG/USAR, entering programs such as Green to Gold, or seeking private-sector employment. Use of ACAP will vary according to individual needs and the career decision made. Enclosed are suggested milestones that will aid in the transition planning process.
5. I consider it of utmost importance that our soldiers be given ample lead-time and information to allow them to make a sound decision concerning reenlistment, NG/USAR transfer, or departure. Soldiers who have made an informed decision should be afforded ample and timely opportunity to utilize all services.

Encl


TERRY L. TUCKER
Major General, USA
Commanding

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CF:
DCG, USAARMC

Time to ETS or
Retirement Date

Career Decision Milestones

24 months	Individuals eligible to retire start career decision process. Earliest date to initiate ACAP program's Congressionally Mandated Phase I – Preseparation Briefing. Topics covered include: VA, Small Business Administration, Employment Services, Transition Planning, Finances, and Transportation.
12 months	Commander's retention interview. Earliest date to apply for retirement. ETS individuals begin career decision process and can initiate ACAP's Phase I – Preseparation Briefing. Individuals who are retiring may attend ACAP's Phase II – 3 day Career Search Workshop and after completion of workshop may begin ACAP's Phase III – use of job search tools, career exploration software, resume development and individual counseling appointments.
8 months	First day to reenlist.
8 – 6 months	ETS individuals begin Congressionally Mandated Phase I of ACAP. Additionally, ETS individuals must attend an AG pre-transition briefing that addresses reenlistment, ARNG/USAR, permissive transition leave, voluntary early separation benefits, early-outs, medical discharges, separation pay and healthcare options (if applicable depending on separation).
6 – 4 months	ISR first contact concerning ARNG/USAR transfer. In-Service Recruiting present benefits of transfer to NG or reserves. ETS individuals begin ACAP's Phase II by attending 3 day Career Search Workshop and afterwards may begin ACAP's Phase III by scheduling individual appointments to use job search tools, career exploration software, resume development tools and individual counseling options.
4 – 3 months	Start serious private sector job search by scheduling appointments with ACAP counselors, using computerized job databases and career research software, using internet, and writing resumes/cover letters.
3 months	Last day to reenlist. Begin to utilize transitional leave.
6 weeks	Retirement clearance papers available.
2 weeks	ETS clearance papers issued.
0 weeks	ETS date/retirement date/start of transitional leave.

Encl to memo, ATZK-CFA-A, 30 Oct 03, subj: Thunderbolt Six Policy Memo No. 40-20 – Military Career Decision Time Requirements